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WHAT WOMEN ARE DOING IN FOREST CONSERVATION

A radio conversation between Elizabeth S. Pitt of the United States Forest Service, and Wallace Kadderly, Chief of the Radio Service, Department of Agriculture, broadcast October 5, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 90 associated radio stations.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

From Washington we lead off with a forestry story.

Most of us are in the habit of thinking of forestry as a man's game, but when you really get down and analyze it, women are very much in the forestry picture because forests contribute so much to family security. And who is more interested in family security than women?

Women are doing some exceedingly worthwhile things in forest conservation. Elizabeth Pitt of our Forest Service will support me in that statement - I hope. She had better because it was she who told me that the women of the United States are doing things in forestry, and I took her word for it - - at the time - - reserving for this precise moment some questions that will bring out the evidence.

Betsy, I'll start with a very simple, easy-to-answer-in-a-few-words question. Something that doesn't take in too much territory. This question: What can women do about forest conservation?

PITT:

Goodness, is that what you call a simple question - - one to be answered in a few words?

KADDERLY:

Now, wait a minute -- I knew you couldn't answer it completely in a few words - - and I don't want you to - - If you did we'd be all through right now, and that wouldn't do.

PITT:

Well, here's a simple answer. It's the women's club. Any women's club.

KADDERLY:

Ah! Now we're started!

PITT:

All the large organizations of clubwomen have long-range programs covering important national problems that range from child welfare to forest conservation. You know the General Federation of Women's Clubs, don't you? Mrs. Saidie Orr Dunbar is the President.

KADDERLY:

Yes, I've known Mrs. Dunbar many years-- and I've known something about  
(over)

the work of her organization too. As I understand it, the General Federation is particularly interested in social problems. They do some exceedingly worthwhile things.

PITT:

They certainly do. I suppose you know, then, that they have a Committee on Conservation?

KADDERLY:

Yes, but I wish you'd tell us just what they do in the field of conservation.

PITT:

The first thing they do is to study conditions so they will be thoroughly informed about conservation problems--not only the local problems but also national problems.

KADDERLY:

On the theory, I suppose, that they can't expect to get intelligent action on a matter until they are well informed about it themselves.

PITT:

That's it--and that's especially important when you are dealing with forest conservation because that's a story that has to be told over and over again. Forest conservation isn't a temporary matter. It's a continuous, long-range problem with new phases coming up all the time. The floods and dust storms that have been plaguing us for the last few years are an example of that.

KADDERLY:

Quite true---and the people of the United States, I am sure, are becoming more and more convinced that conservation is not merely a word -- it has meaning. Our country is one-third forest land, and the people as a whole have really just begun to wake up to what our forests mean to our national well-being.

Betsy, are there other organizations besides the General Federation of Women's Clubs that are actively interested in conservation.

PITT:

Yes, indeed. The Daughters of the American Revolution have been very active for many, many years. Mrs. Henry M. Robert, the President-General of the Society, is making reforestation an important project for the celebration of the D. A. R. Golden Jubilee in 1940.

KADDERLY:

Planting trees to celebrate a Golden Jubilee! Excellent!

PITT:

They've been working in cooperation with the United States Forest Service for several years--putting their trees on National Forest lands that need replanting. The women raise the money to pay for the planting stock and the CCC boys plant the young trees under the supervision of trained foresters.

KADDERLY:

Have they done much of this sort of thing?

PITT:

Quite a lot. Not only the D. A. R. and the General Federation have forests of their own, but the Garden Club, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Business and Professional Women, and the Catholic Daughters of America have established plantations in cooperation with the United States Forest Service. The Girl Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls also have extensive forest conservation projects.

KADDERLY:

How large are these forests the clubwomen plant? I don't want to seem skeptical about these feminine forests, but it - - -

PITT:

Oh, the women have real forests all right. They average from 50 to 200 acres. It takes about a thousand trees to plant an acre so you can figure for yourself they've furnished quite a few trees. I think the Wisconsin School children have the largest forest of this type. Their work is sponsored by the Federation of Wisconsin Garden Clubs, and they have 1200 acres.

KADDERLY:

1200 Acres! A thousand trees to the acre. That's 120,000 trees. How much money did they have to raise to do that?

PITT:

It costs somewhere around \$5 to \$6 an acre to buy planting stock in that part of the country, I think, so they must have raised six or seven thousand dollars.

KADDERLY:

Good for the Wisconsin school children. Fine work! - - Now besides planting trees, what else do the clubwomen do about forest conservation? Is tree-planting the main thing?

PITT:

Not at all. Nearly everybody knows that 90 percent of all the forest fires in the United States--and there are plenty of them--are caused by human beings who are careless with fire in the woods. That's why fire-prevention education has to go on all the time. Nobody can be more effective in this educational work than women. If they get their youngsters started right, think what that means.

KADDERLY:

Great possibilities there!

PITT:

And another thing they have done is to sponsor the teaching of conservation in the public schools.

KADDERLY:

That's important, too.

Betsy, when the women's clubs are studying the general subject of forest conservation, where do they get their program material?

PITT:

From any place they can. A program chairman in a club studying conservation doesn't leave many stones unturned. She watches the newspapers and magazines for the latest information, and she gets all the help she can from the local library and the proper branches of the State government, and quite often she writes to Washington.

KADDERLY:

Does the Forest Service furnish any material they can use?

PITT:

Yes, indeed. In fact there has been such a demand for suggestions for club programs on forestry that we have worked up one that has been quite widely used. We got some experienced clubwomen to help us with it because we wanted to have it in the form best suited to their needs.

KADDERLY:

Is this program available to any clubwoman?

PITT:

Oh, yes. If any clubwoman wants it, all she needs to do is send us a postcard.

KADDERLY:

A postcard to the United States Forest Service, Washington, D. C., with the words "club program on forestry" is all that is needed. Well, that's easy and I hope all the clubwomen among our listeners heard it.

And there's a pretty good place to stop--Women's groups are doing things in forest conservation; the Forest Service has prepared suggestions for club programs in this field to meet a growing demand for that sort of thing---And these suggestions are available on request.

Farm and Home Friends, Elizabeth Pitt of the United States Forest Service has mentioned some of the ways in which clubwomen of America are practicing forest conservation.

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